

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks and the enclosed Declaration under 37 CFR § 1.132.

By this Amendment claims 1, 3, 5, 10 and 12 have been amended. Applicants have also cancelled claims 4, 6-9 and 13-15.

The claims presently pending in the application are 1, 3, 5, 11-12 and 16.

The amendments made to claims 1, 3, 5, 10 and 12 are fully supported in the as-filed specification.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1, 3-12, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rugmaker's Homestead Website: A Brief General History of Rag Rugs; Rugmaker's Homestead Website: #17: Loom Woven Rag Rugs; and Rugmaker's Homestead Website: #19: Frame Woven, Twisted Warp and Twisted Weft Rugs for the reasons of record. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The rejection under § 103(a) should be withdrawn since the amendments to independent claim 1 serve to introduce certain parameters regarding the strips, namely, that they have a width between 1 and 10 cm and the non-woven fabric has a weight/surface ratio between 10 g/m² and 200 g/m², which clearly distinguish over the prior art.

In further support of the non-obviousness of the currently amended set of claims, Applicant also herewith submits a Declaration by Mr. Giancarlo Crema, where the advantages of the claimed invention have been further demonstrated. This responds to the Examiner's request that evidence that the product as claimed has properties which are unobvious and unexpected be supplied.

In view of the prior art cited, Applicant has amended claim 1, so that it now reads as follows:

"Textile product composed of a weft and a warp, in which the weft and the warp are composed of strips of non-woven fabric, wherein the non-woven fabric is composed of hydroentangled, thermo-bonded or spun-bonded fibers, said strips having a width between 1 and 10 cm and said non-woven fabric having a weight/surface ratio between 10 g/m² and 200 g/m²."

It will be apparent to the Examiner from the arguments provided below with reference to the annexed Declaration, that the claimed combination of features allows the textile product to exhibit properties which are absolutely not derivable from the prior art and which are totally unexpected in terms of utility and versatility.

In said Declaration, the steps involved in the preparation of the textile product according to the invention are illustrated, together with an image of the final product as claimed. Then an Experimental Section has been added in order to further support the non-obviousness of the invention.

From an examination of the above mentioned illustrations, it is clear that the claimed combination of strip features confers upon the final textile product a structure that allows the product itself to collect and retain a large amount of water, in spite of the very poor water absorption properties of the fiber materials *per se*, which comprise the textile product.

It has been reported that fiber materials like polyethylene, polypropylene, and polyamide, have a water absorption value not greater than 0.30 (according to ASTM D-570). This means that the fibers, as such, do not demonstrate good water absorption properties. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would never have even considered using said fibers for the purposes of the claimed invention, i.e. making products to be used as cleaning cloths, since it would have been evident that there would be no expectation of success.

Notwithstanding this noticeable and demonstrable teaching away from the claimed invention, Applicant found textile products according to the invention that show very good water absorption properties owing to the claimed selected combination of strip features (non-woven nature, width, and weight/surface ratio) that confer upon the final product a structure having suitable interstices where an unexpectedly large amount of water can be retained. Analogously, when said textile products are used as cleaning cloths, the same interstices can advantageously also collect and retain great quantities of dirt and dust from the surfaces to be cleaned.

Particularly from the Experimental Section of the Declaration, it is clear that the textile product according to pending claim 1 shows water absorption greater than 700%. This means that the product is capable of retaining water in an amount greater than 7 times its own weight!

Furthermore, the gathered and irregular surface resulting from the weaving of twisted strips is suitable in terms of roughness and resistance to rubbing which are useful in view of their use as cleaning cloths for completely removing resistant stains and the like from surfaces without damaging them.

In view of the annexed Declaration, it will be readily understood and appreciated that the contribution of the fiber material to the resulting water absorption value is actually negligible. In fact, having regard to the value of 700%, not more than 10%, on average, can be ascribed to the fiber material chosen, while the remaining 690% of water absorption is achieved by the structure of the final textile product as claimed herein.

Therefore, the results achieved by the claimed invention are unambiguously ascribable to the selection of the claimed features of the strips of nonwoven fabric that confers the above clarified structure to the claimed product.

The selection of claimed features is not at all recognizable in the cited prior art found at the Rugmaker's Homestead Website, where only a generic disclosure on woven rugs is reported.

One of ordinary skill in the art would never have found in the cited website any motivation to take the direction of selecting the claimed features, since no such suggestion or hint can be found therein, even more so in view of the "teaching away" given the very poor water absorption properties shown by the fibers considered. Therefore, it was evidently surprising and a highly unexpected result to improve the water absorption value so significantly by means of the claimed invention.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims distinguish over the art and, as such, the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully solicited since the preponderance of the evidence clearly weighs in favor of a determination of non-obviousness from a dispassionate examination of the facts.

The issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Please charge any fees which may be due and which have not been submitted herewith to our Deposit Account No. 01-0035.

Respectfully submitted,

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